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GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ADOLESCENT PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL BEHAVIORS RELATED TO WARMTH AND CONTROL

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ABSTRACT

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ADOLESCENT PERCEPTIONS

OF PARENTAL BEHAVIORS RELATED TO WARMTH AND CONTROL

by Jessica Ann Kozlowski

This thesis explored adolescent perceptions of their parents' warmth- and control-related parenting behaviors. Warmth was defined as involvement and acceptance, and control was addressed according to lax and strict behaviors. Differences in male and female adolescent perceptions of their parents were examined as well as the differences between maternal and paternal behaviors. In this retrospective study, 100 college students completed a portion of the Parent Behavior Form, which assessed students' agreement with acceptance, involvement, lax control and strict control items related to their parents' behaviors when they were sixteen years old.

Results from the study indicated that adolescents generally perceived their parents as involved, accepting, and somewhat strict. Also, male and female subjects did not differ in any of the four dimensions of parenting behaviors. However, mothers were perceived as exhibiting more behaviors pertaining to warmth, involvement, and lax control than fathers.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Adolescence is a time of life marked by transitions and physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development, and has been referred to as a period of "storm and stress" (Hall, 1904). Adolescents strive to form their own identity and develop their own set of values. In addition to developmental changes, the adolescents of today are also faced with societal changes of enormous impact. Along with the emergence of sexual feelings, today's adolescent must cope with the fear of lethal sexually-transmitted diseases. Adolescents must also deal with forces in their neighborhoods such as drugs, gangs, and street violence. In their own homes, adolescents may be exposed to violent and sexually-explicit media, and spend considerable time unsupervised because of their working parents or single parents. These challenging times for adolescents can be a positive experience if met with the appropriate support and guidance.

Most adolescents expect that their parents will help and support them. The role of the parent is tremendously important for adolescents growing up in the world today. Thus, parenting has been the focus of a large body of research, particularly recent research on parenting of adolescents (e.g., Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Hauser et al., 1984; Steinberg, Dornbusch & Brown, 1992). This body of parenting research clearly shows that parenting styles and behaviors have a significant influence on children's and adolescents' cognitive and socio-emotional development and on the quality of the parent-child relationship.

In the parenting literature, the landmark theoretical work of Baumrind (1971, 1978, 1991) points to the importance of two major dimensions of parenting: warmth and control. Subsequent research has examined warmth and control from diverse

perspectives, including adolescents' and parents' perceptions of warmth- and control-related behaviors.

Adolescent perceptions of parental behaviors are important to examine because they provide the adolescents' view of adolescent socialization behaviors. From the adolescent perspective, we gain an understanding of the importance of warmth and control in parenting and whether mothers and fathers differ in these dimensions during adolescence. Further, given the important sex-role behaviors occurring during adolescence, we gain a viewpoint of whether boys and girls perceive different levels of warmth and control on the part of their parents. Through this research, a better understanding will be achieved concerning adolescent perceptions of parenting behaviors, which can provide information on how to guide adolescents in the challenges they face.

Identification of the problem

Baumrind's theory (1971) and subsequent research has formed the framework for developing two dimensions of parenting: warmth and control. From this basis, a body of literature has emerged examining adolescents' perceptions of warmth and control in their parents' behaviors. The present study will retrospectively explore the perceptions that college students have of their parents' warmth- and control-related behaviors at the time when the students were sixteen years old. The dimensions of warmth and control will be examined by assessing acceptance and involvement for the warmth dimension, and lax control and strict control for the control dimension. The study will also examine the differences that may exist in male and female adolescent perceptions of parental behaviors. In addition, maternal versus paternal differences in acceptance, involvement, lax control and strict control will be assessed.

Justification of the problem

Understanding the way that adolescents perceive parenting behaviors can be of great assistance to both parents and their adolescents. The determination of which parenting behaviors are effective provides insight for parents who are unsure about their role as parents. One of the ways that parents can be assisted is by providing research that gives the adolescent point of view toward parenting behaviors. The positive experiences that adolescents have in family interactions are crucial in order to maintain a healthy family system. Therefore, research that explores adolescent perceptions of the extent of warm and controlling parental behaviors is useful for furthering our understanding of adolescent socialization and for providing training on the parenting of adolescents.

Statement of the problem

Baumrind's (1971) parenting theory and the subsequent parenting research has provided the basis for studying the dimensions of parenting related to warmth and control. Research has examined adolescent views of parent-child interactions in areas such as communication, closeness between family members, and parental criticism (Barnes & Olson, 1985; Harris & Howard, 1981; Paulson, Hill, & Holmbeck, 1991). Some research compares adolescents' and parents' perceptions of family life (Jessop, 1981; Niemi, 1974; Noller & Callan, 1986) but does not categorize the different variables related to family life in any consistent or theoretically-driven manner. Other research has looked at parenting behaviors in relation to different child or adolescent outcomes, such as academic performance or sex role orientation (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Kelly & Worell, 1976; Steinberg et al., 1992), but has not examined differences between maternal and paternal parenting behaviors. This study will examine adolescent perceptions of specific parenting

behaviors and explore the differences between maternal and paternal behaviors and male and female adolescent perceptions.

In more recent research, adolescent perceptions of parental behavior have typically been examined in relation to the parents' perceptions (Jessop, 1981; Noller & Callan, 1986). This body of research has found conflicting results regarding the amount of agreement between parents and their adolescents concerning the amount of warmth or conflict existing in the family. The present study will not examine the perception of the parent, but will rather fully explore the adolescent perceptions of parents' behaviors. Thus, the current study will provide a more comprehensive examination of adolescent perceptions of their mother's and father's parenting style.

Differences in parental behaviors that are dependent on the gender of the parent have been the subject of a large body of research. Generally, mothers are perceived as the nurturing, warm, and involved parent, while fathers are perceived as the decision-making and instrumental parent (e.g., Droppleman & Schaefer, 1963; Hauser et al., 1987; Muller & Goldberg, 1980; Steinberg, 1987). However, some recent research has found that for some adolescents, mothers were perceived as the instrumental parent in the family (McDermott et al., 1987). While the dimensions of warmth and control are implied in the past research, those studies did not specifically attempt to understand differences in parental behaviors related to the dimensions of warmth and control. The current study will examine differences in perceptions of maternal versus paternal behaviors and will do so in relation to the dimensions of warmth and control.

Variations in perceptions between male and female adolescents has also been the subject of a good deal of parenting research (McDermott et al., 1983; Noller & Bagi, 1985; Singh & Singh, 1986). Some differences were found between girls' and boys' perceptions of parental warmth- and control-related behaviors (Ausubel et al., 1954;

McDermott et al., 1983; Noller & Callan, 1986). Results from these studies revealed that adolescent girls perceived more warmth-related behaviors from parents than boys and also that boys perceived more strict control from parents than girls. However, warmth was not defined in terms of involvement and acceptance in the earlier studies. With respect to parental control, the research that found gender differences in perceptions of parental control is minimal and not current (e.g., Grinder & Spector, 1965; Hess & Torney, 1962). More recent literature that explores gender differences in perceptions of parental control-related behaviors (Harris & Howard, 1984) specifically dealt with parental authority which is not the same concept as strict control in parenting. This study will examine gender differences in adolescent perceptions of parental involvement, acceptance, lax control and strict control. These issues are important to examine because the more we can find out about the way adolescents perceive their parent-child relationships, the more we will understand about the parenting behaviors that are important to adolescents. This study could also shed more light on gender differences in perceptions of parental behaviors.

This study sought to identify gender differences in adolescent perceptions of their parents' behaviors. The following questions were addressed:

1. How positive or negative are adolescent perceptions of parental behaviors relating to the dimensions of warmth and control?
2. Do adolescent perceptions of their parents' behaviors differ depending on the gender of the parent?
3. Do differences exist between male and female adolescent perceptions of parental behaviors?

Hypotheses

Eight specific hypotheses were tested in this study regarding maternal and paternal warmth (involvement, acceptance) and control (lax control, strict control), based on previous literature, as indicated previously and elaborated on in Chapter Two.

Hypothesis 1a: Mothers will be perceived as more involved than fathers.

Hypothesis 1b: Mothers will be perceived as more accepting than fathers.

Hypothesis 1c: Mothers will be perceived as exhibiting higher levels of lax control than fathers.

Hypothesis 1d: Fathers will be perceived as exhibiting higher levels of strict control than mothers.

Hypothesis 2a: Girls will report higher levels of parental involvement than boys.

Hypothesis 2b: Girls will report higher levels of parental acceptance than boys.

Hypothesis 2c: Boys will report lower levels of parental lax control than girls.

Hypothesis 2d: Boys will report higher levels of parental strict control than girls.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

This study examined adolescent perceptions of their parents' behaviors, and whether there are gender differences in adolescent perceptions of their mother's and father's parenting styles. More specifically, the following questions were addressed:

1. How positive or negative are adolescent perceptions of parental behaviors relating to the dimensions of warmth and control?
2. Do adolescent perceptions of their parents' behaviors differ depending on the gender of the parent?
3. Do differences exist in male and female adolescent perceptions of parental behaviors?

The literature review which follows will examine the various dimensions surrounding adolescent perceptions of parental behaviors. Developmental milestones in adolescence and conceptual models of parenting styles will be discussed to provide both a developmental and a conceptual framework for interpreting the literature on adolescent perceptions of their mother's and father's parenting styles. In addition, the research related to parenting styles, as well as research on adolescent perceptions of parental behaviors and gender differences in adolescent perceptions will be discussed. This review will be organized into four sections: (1) Adolescent Developmental Perspectives, (2) Theories of Parenting Behaviors, (3) Adolescent Perceptions of Parenting Behaviors, and (4) Gender Differences in Adolescent Perceptions of Parental Behavior.

Adolescent Developmental Perspectives

Adolescence represents a period of significant change in physical, cognitive and socio-emotional development. According to the "father of adolescence," G. Stanley Hall

(1904), adolescence is a stage of life that one must go through in order to reach maturity. During this adolescence phase, which Hall referred to as a period of "storm and stress," adolescents experience an extended period of upheaval, suffering, passion, and rebellion against adult authority as well as physical, psychological, and social change. Although there is little empirical support for Hall's "storm and stress" assertion, this perspective is widely held today (Nielsen, 1987).

During adolescence, the initial changes in development that are typically noticed are physical changes. The physical changes that the adolescent experiences may impact on family interactions. Steinberg and Hill (1978) conducted a cross-sectional study of the interactions between male adolescents and their parents. Their findings indicated a correlation between adolescents' physical maturity and parent-child relationships. The physically mature males interrupted their parents more frequently, deferred to their mothers less frequently, and patterns of family interaction in general were more rigidly structured during male adolescent development. Similar results were obtained by Steinberg, (1981) in a longitudinal study that reported on the changes in family interaction through the early to late stages of puberty. These findings demonstrate the impact that physical changes during adolescence can have on family interactions.

In addition to the physical development that takes place during adolescence, important cognitive changes also occur. Piaget (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958) was the first theorist to articulate the differences between adolescent and pre-adolescent thought. During adolescence, most educated individuals develop the ability to think in terms of possibility in addition to the concrete reality and they are capable of scientific reasoning and other types of logical thinking. Such thinking enables educated adolescents to speculate, hypothesize, and build theories on important issues of the world and significant concerns within their lives. The types of thinking characterized by adolescents during this

period was termed *formal operational thought* in Piaget's developmental stage theory of cognitive development. Adolescents use these new cognitive abilities to relate differently to the world around them and are subsequently able to judge and question theories in the world including those related to religion, morality, love, sexuality and other aspects of the social world. These skills can have a tremendous effect on the adolescent as a social being and on the way that the adolescent perceives his or her place in the family, peer group, and society (Belsky, Lerner, & Spanier, 1984; Berger, 1980).

Social and emotional development is greatly influenced by the physical and cognitive development that the adolescent experiences (Steinberg & Hill, 1978). Two of the major themes that can be found in the research on social and emotional development in adolescence are parent-child separation, and identity formation. Parent-child separation has been described in past research using many terms and offering many hypotheses for the phenomenon.

According to Erikson (1950), adolescence is a time of questioning values which will inevitably produce conflict with parents and rebellion toward adults in general. Bell (1967) described this adolescent stage as a "launching period," in which the adolescent strives for increasing independence and autonomy. Such desires impact the family because when the adolescent was younger, she or he was more dependent on family members and may have felt more closely connected with the family. One of the theories held by Anna Freud (1971) was that adolescence is a time to separate from the family and become more of an individual and that this could not be accomplished without some degree of upheaval. The adolescent is still attached to his or her parents but also has the need to break from them and become more independent. The studies by Steinberg (Steinberg & Hill, 1978; Steinberg, 1981) concerning puberty that were mentioned earlier in which boys were found to have more conflict with their parents upon reaching adolescence, are supported

by this contention. Steinberg also found that efforts are made during adolescence to gain influence in the family and to feel established as an independent person in the family.

Mahler (1963) introduced the term *individuation* to describe the process that adolescents go through when they move away from the previous parent-child relationship. Adolescents attempt to become more of an individual, and in doing so, may separate from the family and become less involved in family life. Youniss and Smollar (1985), however, defined individuation as a time of transformation in the relationships with parents rather than an abandonment of these relationships. This implies that the amount of conflict in individuation is varied. Several researchers have taken this stand that varying degrees of conflict may arise in family systems during the adolescent years (e.g., Hamid & Wyllie, 1980; Rosenthal, 1984; Thomas, Gecas, Weigert, & Rooney, 1974; Tolor, 1976). While many of the earlier studies supported Hall's findings of "storm and stress" other studies found that such upheavals may not necessarily affect all aspects of parent-adolescent interactions. Collins (1990) and Hill (1987) found that some parent-adolescent interactions remained stable even though others showed a great deal of change. McDermott and his colleagues (McDermott et al., 1987) also found differences related to separation from the family in adolescence between different ethnic groups and genders. Parent-adolescent interactions as well as gender differences in these interaction are explored more fully in a later section of this review.

Another important issue that influences parent-adolescent interaction is the need for more social interaction with peers (Coleman, 1980; Hunter, 1985; Youniss, 1980). Some research has shown that the strong emphasis on the family life and parent-child interactions is affected by the adolescent's increased focus on peer group interaction. Family life may become less important to the adolescent as he or she becomes more and more involved with his or her peer group (Berndt, 1982). This could imply that a shift

away from the family takes place during adolescence and the peer group becomes a significant socializing influence.

Through their relationships with their parents and friends, adolescents form attitudes about social concerns. Adolescents are influenced by these relationships and by the positions that their parents and peers take concerning social issues. Youniss (1980), among others (Chand, Crider, & Willets, 1975; Feather, 1980), found that adolescents typically share their parents' views on religion, education, politics, values and moral issues, but share their peers' views on sex, drugs, style of hair, and fashion.

Adolescents seek guidance through their parents and peers in working toward one of the most significant tasks of adolescence: identity formation. Erikson (1950) postulated that during adolescence, an attempt is made for the individual to define himself or herself and to form an *identity.* Through this process, the adolescent searches to understand himself or herself as a unique being and to discover what role he or she will play in society and the family. The adolescent will abandon some of the values held by parents and society, while adopting others. In this way, the adolescent achieves the goal of having individual values and a personal identity.

Identity formation takes place for most people during the age range of 18-21 (Adams & Jones, 1983; LaVoie, 1976). Although this is the time that adolescents typically attempt to break away from the family and to establish individuality, the family is still a significant element in the process of identity formation. A number of researchers have proposed a link between parenting styles and adolescent identity formation (Adams & Jones, 1983; LaVoie, 1976). Adams and Jones (1983) reviewed literature on identity development that used primarily male samples and then later conducted a study with female samples to note any differences or similarities with respect to the previous studies. Adams and Jones hypothesized that the females in their study would be particularly

influenced by parenting styles in the formation of their own identity. Results showed that female adolescents with an achieved identity status were raised in a parenting style that encouraged autonomy and independent behavior in a supportive way. Such involvement and acceptance on the part of the parent may make the process of identity formation easier. Further evidence for the importance of family support comes from Cooper, Grotevant and Condon (1983) who also demonstrated that with the support of the family, adolescents may be able to explore identity issues with less stress. Similarly, Hauser and his colleagues (Hauser et al., 1984) and Grotevant and Cooper (1985) have provided empirical support for the contention that family interactions that emphasize warmth, involvement, acceptance, and understanding foster a higher level of ego and identity development in adolescence.

The results from these studies indicate that different styles of family interaction will have an affect on the identity formation in that family's adolescent daughter or son. Specifically, for the majority of subjects, positive family communication and interactions were found to be correlated with adolescent identity exploration. Also, increased warmth and involvement in the family (expressed in terms of communication and warm parent-child interactions) was linked with positive identity formation. These research findings highlight the importance of using effective child-rearing practices and specifically the importance of warm, nurturing parenting behaviors on the social and emotional development of adolescents.

Parenting practices, including parents' basic values, have an enormous impact on adolescent values and behaviors. The second section in this review will outline the different models of parenting styles and the effects that the different parenting styles have on child and adolescent development.

Theories of Parenting Behaviors

Parents play an extremely important role in the life of their children (Demo, Small, & Savin-Williams, 1987) and the parenting styles that they use when raising their children can have an enormous impact on the child and his or her development (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Parenting styles are important to consider when studying adolescent perceptions and experiences because the various models of parenting styles in the research literature can provide guidelines to better understand the descriptions of parenting as understood from the adolescent perspective. Important underlying dimensions in child-rearing have been identified over the course of several decades of research and developed into important and influential theories. This second section will outline the different theories related to parenting before the landmark work of Baumrind, who used those earlier models and elaborated on them to produce her theory of parenting. Subsequently, this section will discuss in depth the theory of parenting that Baumrind developed because of its pertinence to the aspects of parenting which will be explored in the following study .

Considerable research has been conducted in the area of parenting styles and behaviors and the influence of various parenting styles on child and adolescent development (Baldwin, 1955; Baumrind, 1967; 1971; 1973; Becker, 1964; Dornbusch et al., 1987; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Schaefer, 1959; Steinberg, Elmen & Mounts, 1989). Researchers interested in parenting have attempted to discover consistencies in the way that parents interact with their children. Initially, it might have appeared that finding a small number of discrete parenting styles would be too difficult a task to undertake. However, considerable research has uncovered consistencies in parenting styles between different parents that have been subjects in these studies.

Two major dimensions were prominent in most early studies on parenting: warmth and control. Schaefer (1959) highlighted these two dimensions by analyzing past research

and organizing the total number of variables from the earlier research under the two headings of "warmth/hostility" and "control/autonomy." Thus, warmth and control became the buzzwords for the two dimensions of parenting behaviors. Several descriptions of the terms "warmth" and "control" have been outlined in past research. Schaefer (1959) defined warmth in terms of expression of affection, emotional support, and sharing. Warmth in parenting has also been described as a positive, benevolent attitude in child-rearing (Kelly et al., 1983). Perceived closeness has also been cited as part of the dimension of warmth (Paulson et al., 1991) and such closeness can take the form of support, communication, and/or general involvement. The concept of warmth also has roots in psychoanalytic theory as well as in behaviorist theory (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). In psychoanalytic theory, warmth is related to the way that parents encourage children to identify with them and inhibit aggressive tendencies. In behaviorist theory, warmth is a way that parents reward children for the desired behavior.

Control, on the other hand, has varying definitions depending on whether the adolescent or the parent is defining the term. Lau and Cheung (1987) made the point that "control may convey both care and interference" (p.726). Adolescents may react positively to a certain amount of control present in the family environment because it implies stability and orderliness (Baumrind, 1971; Cheung & Lau, 1985). Schaefer (1959) also noted this in his two dimensional definition of control. On one hand, control was defined as punishment, strictness or parental direction, but on the other hand, Schaefer also termed control to be intrusiveness, and suppression of autonomy. Control can be viewed as an attempt to limit the child's activities (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986) or as an attempt to offer guidance, maintain order, and to encourage responsibility (Baumrind, 1971). The behaviorist and psychoanalytic roots that were found in the dimension of warmth are not as applicable to the dimension of control (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

An extremely influential and well-known researcher also contributed significantly to the specification of the dimensions of parenting. Baldwin (1955) was the first researcher of parenting to employ a warmth/control dimension and apply these dimensions to parenting styles. Using parent interviews and observational methods, Baldwin studied families in order to determine if patterns would emerge in the parents' parenting styles. As indicated by Schaefer (1959), the two dimensions in parenting were again identified. Control and warmth, in Baldwin's theory, could be manipulated by the parent in one of two ways. Parents could use an autocratic method or a democratic method. An autocratic parent is characterized as a parent that imposes controls upon the child to teach the child about the world. This style of parenting is characterized by controlling methods of discipline. The parent may be warm towards the child during other times in parenting, but when using methods of discipline, the autocratic parent does not display warm or respectful behaviors. On the other hand, the democratic parent uses communication with the child to tell the child about the controls or guidelines that exist in the world and employs reasoning when providing the child with discipline. This type of discipline implies a degree of respect for the child and involves warm and encouraging parenting behaviors. Through this landmark work, the concepts of warmth and control became linked with ideas surrounding parenting. Parenting theory began to take shape.

Another interesting study in the early sixties examined parenting and discipline and the way that they relate to the different styles of parenting. Becker (1964) examined many cases of parenting in terms of discipline and uncovered similar variables of importance: warmth (acceptance) versus hostility (rejection). Becker used his findings on warmth and hostility along with a basic foundation from psychoanalytic theory and learning theory to formulate two major techniques for discipline that parents use. *Power-assertive discipline* implied that the parents controlled the situation and used such methods as shouting,

physical punishment, commands and threats to do so. This method emphasizes the variable of control. *Love-oriented discipline* took a more understanding approach and involved praise of the child, reasoning with the child, and showing dissatisfaction with inappropriate behavior. This type of discipline emphasized the variable of warmth. These two models from Baldwin and Becker, however, leave gaps in the range of parenting techniques that do exist. For example, neglectful parenting does not fit into either model and also, the range of parenting is limited because of the extreme nature of the differences in each model.

Baumrind (1971, 1973) was able to address the issue of neglectful parenting as well as the other more varied styles of parenting in her parenting theory. Baumrind postulated two major dimensions to parenting styles: *parental demandingness* and *parental responsiveness*. *Parental responsiveness* is related to the term *warmth* in that the parent gives the child full attention and regards the child's needs as requiring first priority. The term *demandingness* is similar to the connotations of the term *control* in that it implies that the parent expects certain behaviors from the child and that there is little opportunity for reasoning and interactive communication. Baumrind's findings supported the notion that a certain level of firm parental control must be maintained in order to foster healthy growth in children, but that parents must be able to distinguish between "healthy control" (i.e., setting limits, defining what is safe or unsafe for the child to do, and providing control in order to encourage the child to be responsible) versus "unhealthy control" (i.e., allowing little freedom, individual thinking, and autonomy).

Baumrind (1967, 1971, 1973) identified three major styles of parenting in her studies based on the intersection between the two dimensions, demandingness and responsiveness. These parenting styles are authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. She postulated that children raised in the various models of parenting would have different

developmental experiences and parent-child interactions. One style of parenting is the authoritarian style. The authoritarian parent maintains strict control with no possibilities for negotiation on the part of the child. This model of parenting is characterized by strict limits and a high regard for the value of authority. Children are regarded as having needs to be met, but the parents have expectations of the child in return for meeting those needs and a certain level of compliance is also expected. Parental warmth, acceptance and responsiveness are generally low. If the role of the parent is challenged in any way by the child, punishment results. Baumrind (1967, 1971, 1978) found that children raised in an authoritarian environment had difficulty interacting with peers, were more passive than other children, and were lacking in independence, social responsibility, spontaneity, originality and affection.

A second form of parenting style that Baumrind delineated is the authoritative model. The authoritative parent is characterized by his or her democratic outlook and openness to reason with the child. These parents were found to be more tolerant and accepting towards the child's independence while maintaining expectations of mature behavior from the child. Expectations, rules and standards are made clear and are enforced when necessary. At the same time, parents are responsive to any reasonable demand that the child may have. Along with strict (but "healthy") control, authoritative parents give children the warmth and acceptance that they need. Communication levels are high in authoritative parenting. The parent is involved with the child. This reciprocal approach recognizes the rights of both parents and children and employs the approach of give and take in the relationship. Baumrind's studies (1973) found that the authoritative approach was correlated with high levels of independence and social responsibility in children as well as in fostering lower levels of aggression.

A third type of parenting style in Baumrind's work is the permissive form. The permissive parent is at the other extreme of the authoritarian parent, exhibiting lax control or none at all, often leading to neglect of the child. Few demands are made on the child and punishment is rare. Most impulses made by the child are tolerated and accepted, including those that are aggressive or sexual in nature. Children are required to regulate their own behavior and to live by their own schedule. Some cases of permissive parenting are characterized by a great deal of warmth towards the child, but with little discipline. Yet, other cases of permissive parenting are characterized by neglect rather than warmth in the parent-child relationship. In Baumrind's research (1973), children from permissive homes were found to lack impulse control, maturity, self-reliance, independence, and social responsibility.

The dimensions of warmth and control continue to be a major part of parenting theory today. The concepts of warmth and control are utilized in a variety of measures used to assess parenting styles and parent-child interactions (Baumrind, 1967, 1971, 1991; Dornbusch et al., 1987; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Rohner, 1986; Rohner & Rohner, 1981; Sears, Maccoby & Levin, 1957; Steinberg et al., 1989). Baumrind's parenting model has led to some interesting recent studies on parenting and to hypotheses concerning which style is the most effective. Many correlational studies have examined relationships between certain parenting styles and various aspects of child or adolescent behavior.

A comprehensive review by Maccoby and Martin (1983) carefully examined the parenting models and styles as well as the influences the various styles have on child development. According to Maccoby and Martin's review, research has consistently demonstrated that children from authoritative households, which consisted of parental warmth, and "healthy" kinds of control (i.e., inductive discipline, nonpunitive punishment,

and consistency in childrearing), score higher on measures of competence, achievement, and social development. Maccoby and Martin's (1983) review also found that authoritative parenting is linked with positive self esteem in children and adolescents.

A host of studies support the link between parental support and involvement and high self-esteem in children (Bachman, 1970; Coopersmith, 1967; Rosenberg, 1965; Thomas et al., 1974). For example, O'Donnell (1976) found that adolescents' self-esteem is significantly correlated with the way that the adolescent feels towards his or her parents. Similarly, Hoelter (1986) found that adolescents' positive evaluations of their performance of the role of son or daughter and their feelings of being accepted by the parent were correlated to higher self-esteem. In Demo et al.'s (1987) study of the relationship between family relations and the self esteem of the adolescent, higher levels of support, involvement and communication, and lower levels of stress in the parent-adolescent relationship was correlated with a higher self esteem in the adolescent.

The findings from O'Donnell (1976), Hoelter (1986) and Demo et al. (1987) can be linked to the studies discussed earlier concerning adolescent identity formation and the influence that parenting has on this process. As reported earlier, Grotevant and Cooper (1985) found that supportive qualities, such as involvement and acceptance, in parents led to more positive identity exploration on the part of the adolescent. These supportive qualities included allowing the adolescent to be acknowledged within the family and taking an active role toward working out differences. Hauser et al. (1984) also found that positive ego development in adolescence was related to families with positive interactions such as sharing and support. As indicated earlier, the qualities of active communication, encouragement, acceptance, involvement and support are those most typically associated with the authoritative style of parenting.

Although Baumrind mainly conducted her studies with preschool-aged children, Dornbusch and Steinberg and their colleagues (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1991; Steinberg et al., 1989; Steinberg et al., 1992) found that the same model of parenting styles could be successfully applied to adolescents, and that an adolescent in a supportive and democratic environment, similar to the style described by Baumrind as authoritative, would also exhibit positive outcomes.

Dornbusch et al. (1987) conducted their study related to parenting styles in an attempt to find correlations with adolescent school performance. Dornbusch et al.'s research employed data from questionnaires completed by 7,836 adolescents from a variety of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Measures of parenting styles used with the adolescents, student performance, and grade-point averages were obtained from the questionnaires. The three parenting styles postulated by Baumrind (1971, 1973) were used as indices in the questionnaires. Parenting styles were determined from questions involving family communication and parental responses to good and bad grades. The researchers did not expect each adolescent to rate his or her parent in a way that would correspond to one consistent parenting style. Rather, authoritative, authoritarian and permissive styles were identified by taking the mean from each of the three indices and assigning the parenting style which corresponded with the highest mean. Results indicated that for all of the ethnic groups in the sample, an authoritative method of parenting was positively correlated with higher grades and a better school performance. However, although the findings for authoritative parenting were relatively consistent, results pertaining to the other parenting styles were less so. For example, Baumrind (1971, 1978) had reported that authoritarian parenting was correlated with passivity, and a lack of responsibility and independence. These findings led the researchers in the Dornbusch et al. study to expect the same results in adolescents. However, Dornbusch et al. found that for

the Asian subgroup, a high percentage of the families were authoritarian and yet the Asian adolescents were receiving higher grades in school. These results conflicted with the earlier findings from Baumrind's studies. However, for all of the ethnic groups, the authoritative parenting style was correlated with higher grades. Yet, since these differences in consistencies of results were found for the different ethnic groups, Dornbusch et al. concluded that using Baumrind's models of parenting with adolescents can be successful as long as the research is sensitive to the cultural differences that may exist in the sample used. Baumrind employed a primarily white, middle class sample in her research and therefore, the ethnic differences in the results were reflected in the diverse sample used by Dornbusch et al. Dornbusch et al. concluded their article by noting that further research is needed in the use of Baumrind's typology with adolescents. They suggested a longitudinal study in order to attempt to understand the causal patterns that could be found between adolescents and their parents' parenting styles.

Steinberg et al. (1989) further explored the line of research that began with the Dornbusch et al. (1987) study, but Steinberg used a longitudinal method to obtain data. Another difference between this study and the Dornbusch et al. study is that the sample was composed of primarily white adolescents. Steinberg et al. was interested in the relationship between parenting style and academic performance, but using the Dornbusch et al. study as a springboard, Steinberg et al. attempted to ascertain which aspect of authoritative parenting (i.e., acceptance, psychological autonomy, and behavioral control) was most highly correlated with achievement. Steinberg et al. also explored psychosocial maturity as it related to authoritative parenting and achievement. The results of the study confirmed the hypothesis that authoritative parenting helps to foster psychosocial maturity and therefore better prepares the adolescent for academic obstacles. In examining the relationship of parenting style to academic performance, the importance of appropriate

parenting techniques is highlighted once more. Apparently, adolescents who are raised in an involved, accepting, and supportive environment, which also maintained "healthy control" will develop the psychosocial skills necessary to succeed in school. Again, the dimensions of warmth and control were used in assessing parenting styles to find that both qualities are necessary in order to promote positive developmental outcomes in children and adolescents.

Collaboratively, Dornbusch, Steinberg, and their colleagues (Lamborn et al., 1991) embarked on a study that analyzed warmth and control in parenting as these dimensions relate to patterns of competence and adjustment in adolescents. The researchers employed a questionnaire that was developed to reflect the responsiveness and demandingness dimensions suggested by Baumrind that were explained earlier in this review. Using these variables that are related to warmth and control, the researchers coded the questionnaire so that from the results, an indication of parenting style (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful) could be collected. Then, these parenting styles were related to the level of competence and adjustment in the adolescent. Competence and adjustment were measured through many variables such as the use of overall grade point average, the perception of the adolescent regarding his or her own competence, substance abuse and delinquency. The results indicated that adolescents from authoritative homes were the most competent and well adjusted. Adolescents from neglectful homes scored the lowest on the competence and adjustment measures and adolescents from authoritarian and permissive homes scored in the range between the neglectful and authoritative groups. These findings are similar to the findings in the earlier studies by Dornbusch and Steinberg and reemphasize the role that warmth and control in parenting has on adolescent development.

These models of parenting and their effects can be of assistance in the pursuit of family harmony because they provide structure to the concept of parenting and offer suggestions that help to make family interactions loving and positive. However, as Ausubel et al. (1954) so eloquently noted, parent behavior "affects the child's ego development only to the extent and in the form in which he perceives it" (p. 173). Parents and adolescents do not always see eye-to-eye on matters of family life. Therefore, in order to understand the full scope of the perception of the adolescent, it is crucial to understand the differences in the perceptions of family relationships and family life that have been found between parents and adolescents.

Adolescent Perceptions of Parenting Behaviors

In many ways, children are raised to view the world through the eyes of their parents (Belsky et al., 1984). Young children depend on their parents for every life necessity and therefore, come to see their parents as all-powerful and all-knowing (Belsky et al., 1984). As noted earlier, these typical family relationships may change when the child reaches his or her adolescent years. Steinberg and Silverberg (1986) describe this transformation in the way that adolescents view their parents as *deidealisation.* When at one time the child may have considered his or her parents to be the human ideal, sometime during adolescence, the individual changes his or her perspective and realizes that the parent is a fallible human being. This concept displays one of the ways in which the adolescent breaks away from the family and moves to establish his or her individuality. The adolescent works toward becoming more of an individual that is independent from the family and, in doing so, the adolescent develops individual ideas about the world and his or her own family's values (Smollar & Youniss, 1989). This transformation of the way that adolescents perceive the family unit can have a great impact on the family. Callan and

Noller (1986) contend that the feelings and perceptions that adolescents hold concerning their families are crucial to maintain the psychological well-being of the family. Therefore, understanding the way that adolescents typically perceive family interactions and the parent-child relationship is of utmost importance. In this section of the review, the perception of the adolescent, especially as it compares to the perception of the parent, will be examined in terms of the parental behaviors of warmth and control, the two themes discussed earlier.

A conflict exists in the literature concerning the perceptions of adolescents as opposed to the perceptions of their parents regarding the quality of parent-child relationships. Most research demonstrates low correlations between parent and adolescent perceptions of the quality of family life and the actual amount of warmth or conflict in the family (Barnes & Olson, 1985; Jessop, 1981; Larson, 1974; Niemi, 1974; Noller & Callan, 1986, 1988; Smollar & Youniss, 1989). However, some research does report findings of agreement between parent and adolescent on some aspects of family life and interactions (Kagan & Lemkin, 1960; Larson, 1974; Lerner & Knapp, 1975). The more moderate approach is found in other studies that indicate that parents and adolescents have independent yet overlapping perceptions of family relationships (Collins, 1991; Demo et al., 1987; Jessop, 1981).

These differing perceptions are significant because they indicate that what is reported in a study that examines perceptions of family members may not be what is actually happening in the family. Some researchers have speculated on which family member (e.g., mother, father, adolescent, and/or sibling) gives the most accurate portrayal of the quality of family life. Some evidence suggests that the adolescent may have a clearer picture of the parent-child interaction than does the parent. Niemi (1974) reported that because of the socially desirable nature of having positive family interactions, parents

may be more biased in their reports in an attempt to portray the family in a positive light. Niemi hypothesized that adolescents, on the other hand, are in the process of breaking away from the family and do not have the same amount of emotional investment in the family as the parents do. Therefore, adolescents may feel freer to report the honest and less biased accounts of the family. These findings do warrant further study, and they are interesting to note in the discussion of adolescent perceptions of parental behavior. However, before we attempt to understand which family member is more accurate in his or her descriptions of family life, we must first define the differences and similarities that exist between the perceptions of adolescents and their parents.

Most of the literature related to this portion of the review examines the differing perceptions of parents versus adolescents as they relate to family relationships. Little effort is made to explore the different dimensions of parent-adolescent relationships, therefore, a difficulty arises in comparing the dimensions of warmth and control existing in the parent-adolescent relationship. Also, terms other than "warmth" and "control" are often used, so for the purpose of this study, those various terms are included because they provide for a better understanding of the dimensions of warmth and control.

A number of studies indicated that adolescents reported less warmth and acceptance in the family than did their parents (Barnes & Olson, 1985; Callan & Noller, 1986; Lerner & Knapp, 1975; Niemi, 1973; Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1983; Schwarz, 1985). For example, Callan and Noller (1986) studied 54 families that each had an adolescent son or daughter residing at home. Degrees of perceived warmth in the family were measured by asking family members to rate family interactions. Parents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction in their interactions with their son or daughter and the adolescents rated their levels of satisfaction with their parents. When adolescents viewed videotapes of their own family's interactions, most adolescents reported that their parents

were equally as "friendly" as other members of the family. However, when analyzing results obtained from the data from the questionnaires, the researchers found that adolescents perceived family interaction overall in a more negative light that did their parents. Parents were viewed by the adolescents to be more anxious, less involved, and generally less warm than other members of the family. These findings are similar to the ones found in another study by the same researchers (Noller & Callan, 1986) but with a different focus. In the second study, Noller and Callan (1986) attempted to understand adolescents' perceptions of the levels of cohesion and adaptability that exist in the family. The results indicated that adolescents reported less satisfaction with the levels of cohesion and adaptability in the family than did their parents. The researchers hypothesized that although the adolescents want more autonomy and independence in their lives, a desire remains for continuing closeness in the family and for a close, lifelong relationship with the parents. This assertion is supported by other research (Jessop, 1981; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Offer, Ostrov & Howard, 1981) which states that while adolescents attempt to achieve more independence and to form an identity, they continue to desire involvement in family interactions. Therefore, adolescents perceive warmth and acceptance in parent-adolescent relationships as very important.

Another aspect of family life that is related to perceived warmth is the amount of openness and communication in the family that the family members perceive. Barnes and Olson (1985) focused on communication in their research and used a model called the Circumplex Model that outlines the varying amounts of cohesion and adaptability in families. Using this model to analyze their data, the researchers studied 426 families that had an adolescent as one of the family members. Questions were asked of each family member using The Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale. Barnes and Olson found that adolescents perceived less openness and more problems in communication in the

family than did their parents. These findings in general, indicate that adolescents perceive less warmth in the parent-child interactions than do the parents themselves.

As indicated earlier, the dimension of warmth in the studies reviewed so far in this section is defined in terms other than "warmth" specifically. A recent study by Paulson et al. (1991) is an exception. Paulson attempted to analyze the dimensions of warmth and closeness in terms of parent and child perceptions. Subjects studied were 100 seventh-grade boys, 100 seventh-grade girls, and the boys' and girls' parents. Each family member completed a questionnaire measuring perceived closeness and warmth. The parents also completed a questionnaire concerning parental satisfaction with parenting and the children completed a separate questionnaire concerning participation in family activities and self-esteem issues. Unlike the study from Barnes and Olson (1985) in which differences in perceptions of warmth were found between parents and adolescents, the children in the Paulson et al. study reported levels of closeness and warmth that were correlated with the reports from the two parents. In addition, higher levels of perceived closeness and warmth were correlated with a higher degree of parental satisfaction, greater participation in family activities and higher self-esteem in the children.

Concepts related to warmth in parent-child relationships provide insight into one aspect of parenting, while issues concerning parental control provide insight into another aspect. To begin with, a difference has been reported in the definition of control as perceived by the adolescent and his or her parent. Gecas and Schwalbe (1986) found that adolescents defined control as the parent's attempt to limit his or her behavior, and that the parents defined control as a necessary guiding tool to be used to promote positive development in the adolescent.

These two ways of viewing the dimension of control can be applied to "healthy" versus "unhealthy control" that was illustrated by Baumrind (1978). Healthy control is

defined as parental direction, setting appropriate limits and, as indicated above, a method of guiding the adolescent to promote positive development. Unhealthy control is defined as strict punishment and limitations on behavior that may not be appropriate or helpful for the adolescent. This distinction is important to understand because of the significant differences in outcomes in children that experience parenting which employs unhealthy versus healthy control. Healthy control, according to Baumrind (1978), is related to positive developmental outcomes in children (i.e., independence, self reliance and responsibility). Unhealthy control, on the other hand, has been linked to negative outcomes such as dependency and self criticism (McCranie & Bass, 1984). These differing definitions could be partially responsible for the conflict in the literature concerning adolescents' perceptions of their parents' levels of control and power in the family and should be taken into account when examining the literature on control which follows.

The differences between healthy and unhealthy control are especially apparent in a study by Harris and Howard (1981). These researchers examined adolescents' perceptions of parental control in the context of reasonable versus unreasonable control. Reasonable control is defined in the same way that healthy control is defined above and unreasonable control is defined in terms of unhealthy control. Harris and Howard surveyed 844 adolescents between the ages of 14-18 to determine their views of their parents. Results indicated that adolescents differentiate between reasonable and unreasonable parental use of authority or control. The adolescents attributed positive characteristics (i.e., enjoys life, is interested in the adolescent, maintains positive relationships with the spouse) to the parents who employed reasonable measures of control which exhibited the desire to guide the adolescent rather than simply limit the adolescent's behavior. Parents who were described as using primarily unreasonable control with the adolescents evoked responses

in the adolescents of anger, feelings of being criticized, and depression. This study implies that varying degrees of control were perceived by the adolescents and could potentially trigger different emotional responses.

Other studies have drawn comparisons between the perceptions of adolescents versus the perceptions of parents concerning control and authority in the family. In the study discussed earlier in terms of warmth and acceptance, Callan and Noller (1986) also reported that adolescents rated their parents as being more dominant and influential than they were themselves. The adolescents perceived that the parents maintained the power and control in the family. Similar results were found in an earlier study (Droppleman & Schaefer, 1963) in which adolescents reported that the parents were the influential members of the family. Although the adolescents perceived that both parents were influential and powerful in the family, their methods of control were perceived to be different. Mothers used an indirect and covert form of control (i.e., guilt, intrusiveness, protectiveness) while fathers used a more direct form (i.e., strict rules, rigid expectations).

These findings are in direct contrast with a study by Jessop (1981) that indicated that family members, including adolescents, are likely to *overemphasize* their own level of power and control. This data is based on a study involving over 5,000 parents and their adolescent children and their responses to items from a questionnaire. The survey included questions related to the areas of quality of the parent-child relationship, communication, and parental rules. Jessop found that adolescents perceived themselves as having both power and control, while the parents felt that they were the influential family members. The parents and adolescents felt that they each possessed the kind of control that involved decision-making. These results were attributed to the adolescents' increased desire for independence. Jessop felt that this need for autonomy was especially apparent when examining the dimensions of power, decision-making and control.

While Callan and Noller (1986) and Droppleman and Schaefer (1963) found that adolescents perceived that they maintained less control in the family than did their parents, and Jessop (1981) found that adolescents perceived their control in the family as greater than their parents, another study indicated more moderate results. Demo et al. (1987) examined family relationships in the context of their effects on self-esteem, and an aspect of the study measured parents' and adolescents' perceptions of parental control. Demo et al. found that adolescents and their parents maintain independent, yet overlapping, perceptions of the parental control that exists in the family. The range of control in the 139 participating families was considerable. Parents rated themselves in one of five response categories along a continuum from high parental domination to high parental permissiveness, modeled after Baumrind's (1971) parenting models. The adolescents rated their parents' levels of control based on questions from the control/autonomy scales in Schaefer's (1965) Child Report of Parent Behavior Inventory. Therefore, rather than determining where the control exists in the family (i.e., with the parent or with the adolescent), Demo et al. directly assessed the perceptions of family members concerning parental control. The main results indicated that the adolescents' reports were positively correlated with the reports of the mothers and negatively correlated with those of the fathers. However, the findings of agreement between the mothers and the adolescents and the lack of agreement between adolescents and fathers leads to further questions concerning the impact of the gender of the parent on the perceptions that adolescents' hold concerning parental behavior.

Adolescent perceptions of parental behavior can be examined further in terms of the differences that exist between male and female adolescents' perceptions related to the dimensions of warmth and control.

Gender Differences in Adolescent Perceptions of Parental Behavior

In the context of adolescent perceptions of parenting styles, some differences between male and female perceptions have been indicated in research (e.g., McDermott et al., 1983; McDermott et al., 1987; Norrell, 1984; Singh & Singh, 1986; Steinberg & Hill, 1978; Youniss & Ketterlinus, 1987; Wadkar & Palsane, 1987). In the previous section, the research involving parent and adolescent differences in perceptions was reviewed in the context the dimensions of warmth and control. Gender differences in male and female adolescents' perceptions can also be viewed in terms of parental roles, parental warmth and control.

Parental roles are important to examine in the study of perceptions of parental behaviors because often parents are defined by the adolescent in terms of the responsibilities that the parent maintains in the household. As indicated above, much disagreement has been found in the research between parent and adolescent perceptions of family life. The issues surrounding perceptions of parental roles, however, are marked by substantial agreement between family members. Both parents and their children are aware of the stereotypes in which fathers are viewed as powerful and instrumental and mothers as expressive and nurturing (Muller & Goldberg, 1980; Schempp-Matthews, 1981). Steinberg (1987), in his overview of research on the family during adolescence, concluded that these traditional role patterns are indeed typical of the family today. He used the research by Hauser et al. (1987) in support of this view of fathers as the instrumental parent and mothers as the nurturing and involved parent. Hauser et al. also found the occurrence of traditional role patterns in their research. Other studies have also supported this finding that the mother is reported as the parent with more interpersonal concerns, and the father as the parent with more instrumental concerns (Droppleman & Schaefer, 1963; Kagan, 1956; Power & Shanks, 1989; Richards, Gitelson, Peterson, & Hurtig, 1991). For

example, Larson (1974) conducted a study involving 571 families, in which mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters were questioned about different aspects of their family's division of labor and sex role expectations. The results indicated that for traditionally female-oriented responsibilities such as child care, housework and meals, the mother was cited as the responsible agent. For traditionally male-oriented responsibilities like odd jobs, yard work, and taking out the garbage, the father was in charge. Parents and children were in agreement on this kind of role designation. However, when questioned about general dominance in the family, neither the mother nor the father was consistently cited as being in charge of the family.

These results are supported by earlier studies which found that children and adolescents label the mother as the more nurturant figure and the father as the punitive figure (Droppleman & Schaefer, 1963; Emmerich, 1959; Kagan & Lemkin, 1960). The findings above concerning the mother as principally responsible for child care are also consistent with recent research. Collins (1991) found that the mother is perceived as the primary caregiver because of the frequent and extensive amounts of time that she spends with the children. Obviously, such traditional maternal role patterns would not be found in all families, considering the variety of family situations and instances in which the mother is absent from the family environment. While the mother may take most of the responsibility for child-rearing, both parents generally play a role in the parenting process (Collins, 1991).

As noted above, adolescents generally hold very traditional perceptions of parental roles. That is, the mother is perceived as the nurturant caregiver in charge of childrearing, household chores and cooking, while the father is perceived as the figure in charge of household maintenance and repair. In many earlier studies (e.g., Dahlem, 1970; Droppleman & Schaefer, 1963; Kagan & Lemkin, 1960), these role patterns have been

found to a significant degree in the perceptions of children, adolescents and their parents. For example, Kagan and Lemkin (1960) used of sample of 32 boys and 35 girls in elementary school for their study on differences in perceptions of parental attributes. The children were asked questions about disciplinary patterns, decision-making patterns, and characteristics related to child-rearing. All children, males and females, indicated their mother for the questions concerning child-rearing and nurturing behaviors and their father for punishment, decision-making, and power-related questions. Similar results were found in a study which employed a sample of adolescents. Dahlem (1970) gave an 8-item questionnaire to over 200 males and females between the ages of 17 and 22. The questionnaire was designed to measure which parent would be defined.as primarily instrumental in the household and which parent was primarily nurturant in the household. Male and female adolescents selected their mother for the parent described as "more considerate of other people's feelings" and "kinder" (p.189). The father was selected by both sexes of adolescents as the parent who knew more information and was the decision-maker in the home.

One important issue to note, however, is that the studies indicated above are relatively old and the findings that are noted in these studies may, in part, be a reflection of the different values and role patterns of the time. Even so, not all of the earlier studies found identical results indicating traditional role patterns. In some other early studies, an indication was found that the sex of the child determines which parent is perceived as the powerful, decision-maker (Bronfenbrenner, 1961; Fitzgerald, 1966; Grinder & Spector, 1965; Hess & Torney, 1962). These studies indicated that girls perceived their mothers to be the powerful figure while boys cited their fathers as the more omnipotent figure. More recent studies have also supported this finding. For example, in a study by McDermott and his colleagues (McDermott et al., 1987), the female perceptions of power were

compared to males' perceptions. Questionnaires were distributed to 48 families from four different ethnic groups and initial questionnaires were completed, followed by another questionnaire that was filled out three years later. In the initial questionnaire, filled out during late adolescence (ages 17-20), sons and daughters described mothers in support roles concerned with caregiving and nurturing and fathers in power roles involving decision-making and authority. However, after three years, the young adults still chose mothers for support roles, but the girls also chose mothers for power roles as often as they chose fathers. These findings indicate that while sons continued to hold stereotypical perceptions of role patterns, daughters, during late adolescence, often perceived their mothers as more powerful figures. This shift that daughters make in their perceptions of power in the family was explained by the researchers as an attempt for daughters to identify with their same-sex parent. An alternate explanation would be that the daughters, upon reaching young adulthood, may have come to realize the degree of power that women hold in society and may have attributed more power to the mother figure as a result of this realization.

The phenomenon of adolescents identifying with their same-sex parent is worthy of further consideration. In 1960, Kagan and Lemkin asked an important question as part of a study concerning childrens' perceptions of their parents. Kagan and Lemkin were discussed earlier because of their results indicating that children perceive their parents to maintain traditional role patterns. Although these were the results that the researchers found overall, one of the questions that was asked did produce some striking sex differences. The question was "Who would you like to grow up to be?" and it was asked using direct and indirect methods. Girls answered the question as wanting to grow up to be their mother and boys answered as wanting to grow up to be their father. The same sex parent was also chosen as the parent that they "like the best." Although this study

used school-aged children, it still offers some reasoning behind the findings reported above by McDermott et al. (1987). The answers that the children gave to this question could be an indication of their desire to identify with their same-sex parent. The adolescents in the McDermott et al. study would be especially likely to choose the same sex parent as the dominant figure because of the nature of the adolescent stage of development. As discussed earlier in the adolescent development section of this review, one of the most important tasks of adolescence is identity formation. Adolescents may seek to identify with the same-sex parent in order to try to emulate those sex-typed behaviors (McDermott et al., 1987).

Another explanation behind the attribution of power to the same-sex parent is that the child is more involved with and spends more time with the same-sex parent. Montmayor and Brownlee (1987) studied 74 families in order to determine the amount of involvement that adolescents have with their mothers and fathers. Adolescents were interviewed on random days and asked to recount the previous day's events from the time they woke until the time they went to sleep. The adolescents were also required to rate their level of satisfaction for each of the day's events. The findings indicated that sons spent more time with their fathers and daughters spent more time with their mothers. Adolescents, as a whole, spent more leisure time with their fathers and more time engaged in work activities with their mothers. Levels of satisfaction indicated that male and female adolescents felt more satisfied with the time spent with fathers than with mothers, but this could be due to the fact that time spent with fathers was more likely to be leisure time. This data, however, is limited and should not be generalized because of the nature of the sample, that is primarily white, middle-class, and Mormon. The findings that these adolescents spent more time with their same-sex parents, however, is interesting to note in

its relationship to gender identity. The same-sex parent trend can also be seen in some of the gender differences found in adolescents' perceptions of warmth in parenting.

As indicated in an earlier section, the dimension of warmth in parenting is composed of many different themes. Warmth has been studied by looking at communication in the family, perceived closeness, and perceptions of adaptability and cohesion in the family. Unfortunately, the dimensions of warmth in parenting that relate to the concepts of parental acceptance and involvement have not been carefully studied. The present study will attempt to fill this gap in the literature. However, in using the current research and the varying indications of warmth in parenting as they are applied in current research, it is interesting to note that sex differences have been reported in the degree to which girls and boys perceive their parents' level of warmth. This is a concept that is poorly supported, however, because relatively few studies have observed gender differences in American adolescents' perceptions of parental warmth.

The most recent research seems to indicate that mothers are perceived as being the parent that most often displays behaviors related to warmth. In Paulson et al.'s (1991) study on perceived closeness and warmth, Paulson found that seventh grade boys and girls reported greater closeness with their mothers than their fathers, but the reasoning behind these results was not fully developed. Another recent study (Richards et al., 1991) used the Parent Behavior Form to assess the relationship between perceptions of parenting styles and adolescent ego development. Interesting differences were found in the area of adolescents' perceptions of mothering versus fathering. Richards et al. found that mothers scored significantly higher than the father on the scales relating to closeness and warmth. Fathers were rated higher on the scales indicating levels of rejecting behaviors. These findings may not be the most comfortable for fathers to digest, but it must be taken into consideration that the previous research did not find such clear indications about fathers

relating to parental warmth. Earlier studies tended to focus on different aspects related to the dimension of warmth and found different results which indicated greater degrees of gender differences in the adolescents.

Two of the studies that found such gender differences in adolescents used samples of youths from India. Singh and Singh (1986) and Wadkar and Palsane (1987) achieved similar results by using different questionnaires that intended to measure parent-child relations and acceptance. The findings are significant to the current study because of the way that they can be related to the terms of acceptance and involvement. Both studies found that girls perceived their mother as more loving and supportive. Boys, on the other hand, perceived their fathers more favorably than their mothers. Opposite-sex parents were rated as being more rejecting to the adolescents. The results from this study are important to understand for the purpose of the present investigation, but the possible cultural influences from using a completely Indian sample must also be considered.

Nonetheless, the results from the Singh and Singh (1986) and Wadkar and Palsane (1987) studies are supported by other studies that measure warmth in different ways but use samples of American youth. For example, Norrell (1984) examined the concept of self-disclosure and the extent to which adolescents disclose information to their parents. Norrell found that adolescent girls tended to disclose with their mother more frequently while boys often chose their father to disclose information to. Norrell hypothesized that adolescents will disclose information with the person who is closest to them and who is regarded as warm and accepting. In other words, the same-sex parent was chosen for more self-disclosure from the adolescent because the same-sex parent was considered to be more involved with and accepting of the adolescent. These findings suggest important parent gender differences for the dimensions of acceptance and involvement.

According to Montemayor and Brownlee (1987), it is possible that since adolescents spend more time with their same-sex parent, they naturally disclose information with that parent. Noller and Bagi (1985) also conducted a study on self-disclosure and parent-adolescent communication. Adolescents ranging from 16-20 years old were given a questionnaire used to assess parent-adolescent communication and self-disclosure. Communication between mothers and their daughters most often centered around sexual issues and relationships the adolescent may be involved in. Political discussion was the most frequent topic for discussion between the mothers and their male adolescents. Communication with the father was only determined to be significant in relation to the variable of political discussion and male adolescents were found to communicate with the father more frequently than the females. In the area of self-disclosure, female adolescents reported higher levels of self-disclosure with the mothers and fathers than did the male adolescents. These findings indicate that more communication occurred with the mother for both sexes of adolescents, except in the case of the political discussions that male adolescents engaged in with their fathers. Similar findings were reported by Barnes and Olson (1985) using the Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale. Barnes and Olson also found that adolescents rated their mothers as easier to communicate with than their fathers. Higher levels of communication with the mothers may imply an elevated level of warmth or involvement between the adolescent and the mother versus the father.

The patterns of communication found by Noller and Bagi (1985) between sons and daughters and mothers and fathers were inconsistent with findings obtained by Hauser et al. (1987). This study examined sex differences in family interactions by assessing 79 families and the way in which the adolescents and parents in these families communicated with each other. Results indicated that both sons and daughters most often chose their

fathers with which to communicate and with which to engage in problem-solving discourses. This is in direct contrast to the earlier study by Noller and Bagi (1985) in which mothers were the most frequent target for parent-adolescent communication. These results could be attributed to the kind of communication that was studied in the Hauser et al. study. The problem-solving discourses studied by Hauser et al. could be an easier type of communication for fathers to engage in with their adolescents. While the adolescents may have chosen their mothers to discuss personal issues with, the father may be the more likely target for discussion related to less personal problems that the adolescent needs help with. This could be in part due to the image of the father as the decision-maker as was reported by Kagan and Lemkin (1960).

Another measurement of the dimension of warmth was indicated in the variables of caring and understanding in parenting (Youniss & Ketterlinus, 1987). While no sex differences between male and female adolescents were found for the variable of caring in parenting, the variable of understanding in parenting revealed significant differences. Girls felt that their mothers "knew them better" than their fathers, while boys felt that their fathers "knew them as well as" their mothers. This level of understanding could imply a greater degree of involvement between girls and their mothers and boys and their fathers. Also, the researchers reported that girls felt that their mothers understood their feelings and attitudes better than did their fathers, which indicates that the girls felt that their feelings were more accepted by their mothers than their fathers. These findings could be another indication of an attempt for the child to identify with the same-sex parent. The child may feel that he or she is better understood and accepted by the same-sex parent simply because the child and same-sex parent share characteristics inherent to that gender.

It is significant to note that, in general, adolescent boys were more dissatisfied with their family lives and felt less accepted by their family than did the girls (Ausubel et al.,

1954; McDermott et al., 1983; Noller & Callan, 1986). Such findings are especially significant in that these studies span over a period of thirty years. These findings could be explained by the data in another study showing that girls expressed a stronger conviction than boys did when describing ideals involving warmth in family life. Girls stated that family members should be open when acknowledging affection, help each other with chores, cry openly, and share more family-oriented experiences (McDermott et al., 1983). These ideals were similar to the family values that the parents reported to hold and therefore, could imply that, because of a sense of shared values, girls have a more positive family experience than do boys. McDermott et al. also suggested that some of these gender differences could be due, in part, to variations in the ways that male and female adolescents separate from the family and achieve greater autonomy.

Some gender differences have been found in relation to the other dimension in parenting: control. Gender differences in the way that adolescents perceive their parents' level of control is significant to discuss in this section of the review. Unfortunately, the research on gender differences related to parental control is limited. The term control is also used to define a wide range of behaviors and no attempt is made to distinguish between lax and strict control. The present investigation, however, will address this issue by examining the differences in adolescent perceptions of maternal and paternal lax control and strict control.

In most studies, control is defined in terms of the traditional role patterns that parents maintain relating to decision-making, and by their behaviors related to offering guidance or punishment. As discussed earlier, adolescent boys tend to view the father as the dominant figure who uses strict control, while girls distinguish the mother as well as the father as the dominant figure (Grinder & Spector, 1965; Hess & Torney; 1962; McDermott et al., 1987). Control, in these studies, is indicated by the adolescents'

perceptions of which parent maintains the power and influence in the family. However, power and influence are not the full definition of what is meant by the dimension of control. Another aspect of the control dimension is the concept of parental authority.

Hess and Torney (1962) studied the relationship of the child's gender to the child's perception of parental authority. Questionnaires were completed by over 1,500 students ranging in age from 7 to 15 years. Parental authority was assessed by responses the children gave to the question: "Who is the boss in your family?" Results indicated that both male and female children perceived the father as the main authority figure in the family, but males held this perception more frequently than did females. One of the ways that the perception of the father as the primary authority figure is manifested is through the adolescents' perceptions of their parents' expectations of them. In a study on parental criticism of adolescents, Harris and Howard (1984) found that because the father was perceived as an authority figure, the adolescents in their study perceived a higher level of criticism and greater expectations for the adolescents' success from their fathers than from their mothers. This higher level of criticism was correlated with increased stress and less acceptance of the parent by the adolescent.

Control in parenting does not always imply a negative outcome for parents and their children. Healthy control (i.e., reasonable limits) is necessary for guiding the child to appropriate behaviors (Baumrind, 1978). However, the dimension of control has not been studied adequately enough to fully assess the extent to which gender differences exist in adolescents' perceptions of parental control-related behaviors.

The present study will examine gender differences in relation to the extent to which adolescents view their parents' behaviors in specific areas of warmth and control. Specifically, this study will use the Parent Behavior Form to ascertain gender differences in adolescents' perceptions of parental acceptance, active involvement, lax control and

strict control. By categorizing the concepts of warmth and control into more specific variables (warmth-involvement and acceptance; control-lax and strict control), this study will be able to indicate the gender differences that exist in adolescent perceptions of parenting behaviors in more depth than the previous studies have been able to achieve.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods

Subjects

The participants included 50 males and 50 females recruited from a General Psychology class at San Jose State University in San Jose, California. Table 1 presents background information on the subjects. As Table 1 shows, the ages of the subjects ranged from 17-25 years, with a mean age of 19.3. Males averaged a year older ($\underline{M}$ = 19.6) than females ($\underline{M}$ = 18.9).

The sample consisted of primarily Asian American (38%), Hispanic (20%) and White non Hispanic (38%) students. The rest of the sample consisted of 2% African American and 2% Middle Eastern students. Table 1 indicates that a higher proportion of Asian Americans in the study were males and a higher proportion of Hispanics were females. The White portion of the sample was more evenly distributed among the genders. All subjects had lived with their mother *and* father when they were sixteen years old. Students were selected according to their custodial arrangements at age sixteen to ensure that both parents were present in the student's homes at that time and therefore could be adequately assessed by the students in terms of parenting styles.

Information about parent level of education was also sought in the questionnaire. As Table 1 shows, 42% (18% jr. high/some high school and 24% high school) of the mothers were not college educated, while 58% of the mothers had some college or a college degree. Father level of education was 27% for high school educated or some high school and 73% for some college education or college degree. No compensation was given to the participating subjects.

TABLE 1

Age, Ethnicity, and Parental Education Background

	Males	Females	Total
Age of Subjects			
Mean Age	19.6	18.9	19.3
Std. Deviation	1.7	1.4	1.6
% Ethnicity of Subjects			
Asian American	26%	12%	38%
Hispanic	5%	15%	20%
African American	1%	1%	2%
White (non-Hispanic)	17%	21%	38%
Middle Eastern	1%	1%	2%
% Level of Education-**Mother** of Subjects			
Jr. High/Some High School	10%	8%	18%
High School Diploma	9%	15%	24%
Some College	11%	10%	21%
College Degree or Postgraduate Degree	20%	17%	37%
% Level of Education-**Father** of Subjects			
Jr. High/Some High School	6%	11%	17%
High School Diploma	5%	5%	10%
Some College	15%	7%	22%
College Degree or Postgraduate Degree	24%	27%	51%

Measures and Procedures

Subjects completed a typed questionnaire during the scheduled class time. Subjects were asked to think back to the time when they were sixteen years of age. The questions on the questionnaire were to be answered according to the way that the participants remembered those past experiences. Participants completed separate forms

for questions pertaining to mother and father behavior, although the questions were identical in nature for each sex of parent.

Questions were derived from the Parent Behavior Form (PBF) devised by Worell and Worell (1974). The original form consists of two identical sets of 117 items, one pertaining to the mother and one to the father. Each item describes a particular parent behavior for which the respondent rates each statement as "like," "somewhat like," or "not like" that parent. All items that are marked in the space provided for the answer "like" are rated a score of 3. "Somewhat like" answers are scored a 2 and "not like" answers score a 1. These items comprise 13 scales assessing parenting behaviors performed by the parents of the adolescent. The scales comprise the following areas: Acceptance, Active Involvement, Equalitarianism, Cognitive Independence, Curiosity, Cognitive Competence, Lax Control, Conformity, Achievement, Strict Control, Punitive Control, Hostile Control, and Rejection. These thirteen areas are intended to be used as units from the dimensions of warmth, control, and cognitive involvement.

For the purposes of this study, two of the scales pertaining to the dimensions of warmth and control were used. Therefore, a questionnaire was devised that included the questions from the Parent Behavior Form's subscales of Acceptance, Active Involvement, Lax Control and Strict Control, which are four of the scales that directly pertained to the dimensions of warmth and control. The questions used in the questionnaire of the present study were identical to the items in the PBF for the subscales listed.

All of the questions in the Parent Behavior Form that pertained to these four scales were used in the questionnaire. The four selected scales were comprised of 9 questions each for a total of 36 questions. A separate form was used for the questions pertaining to the mother of the subject and the father of the subject. The total questionnaire consisted of both forms for a total of 72 questions (i.e., 36 for Mother and 36 for Father).

Acceptance and Active Involvement relate to the warmth dimension and Lax Control and Strict Control pertain to the control dimension. Examples of the questions used are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Representative Items from Each PBF Scale

PBF Scale	Representative Item
Acceptance	Has a good time at home with me.
Active Involvement	Often praises me.
Lax Control	Does not make me obey if I complain
Strict Control	Is always telling me how I should behave

The four scales can be defined in terms of the parent behavior that the scale is describing. Acceptance pertains to a parent who is warm, loving and accepting of the child. Active Involvement implies a parent that takes an active concern for letting the child know that he or she is important to the parent. Lax Control indicates that the child has no specific rules or guidelines to follow in the household. Strict Control pertains to parents that enforce many rules and who closely supervise every activity of the child.

The reliabilities for the selected scales are as follows: Acceptance = .89; Active Involvement = .87; Lax Control = .66; Strict Control = .76. The entire questionnaire used in the study is included in Appendix D.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

The results from the present study will be presented in terms of the four research questions outlined previously.

Research Question 1: How positive or negative are adolescent perceptions of parental behaviors relating to the dimensions of warmth and control?

The first question examined students' responses to each of the items related to involvement, acceptance, lax control and strict control. Scores for each item could range from a low of 1 (Not descriptive of parent) to a high of 3 (Descriptive of parent). Tables 3 to 6 display the means and standard deviations for each item on each of the four subscales.

Involvement

Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations for the involvement items. Individual item scores ranged from 1 to 3, with a mode of 2, and the overall mean for the involvement subscale was 2.11. Students responses to all of the involvement items were similar in that most of the means were close to 2.0. Thus, students perceived these items as somewhat descriptive of their parents. The item with the highest mean is item #6 ($\underline{M}$ = 2.24) (i.e., Has a good time at home with me.), followed by item #9 ($\underline{M}$ = 2.19) (i.e., Smiles at me often). The lowest mean score occurred in items #7 ($\underline{M}$ = 2.05) (i.e., Is easy to talk to) and item #3 ($\underline{M}$ = 2.06) (i.e., Makes me feel free when I'm with him/her).

TABLE 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Students' Responses to Involvement Items

	Mean	S.D.
Involvement Items	**2.11**	**.52**
1. Talks over my worries with me.	2.07	.61
2. Makes me feel better when I'm upset.	2.07	.59
3. Makes me feel free when I'm with her/him.	2.06	.64
4. Comforts me when I'm afraid.	2.09	.70
5. Cheers me up when I'm sad.	2.09	.66
6. Has a good time at home with me.	2.24	.64
7. Is easy to talk to.	2.05	.64
8. Sees my good points more than my faults.	2.10	.61
9. Smiles at me often.	2.19	.62

Acceptance

Table 4 presents the means and standard deviations for the acceptance items. As Table 4 shows, the overall mean was 2.12 and the mode was 2.0, similar to the involvement subscale. The item with the highest mean was item #6 ($\underline{M}$ = 2.28) (i.e., Gives me a lot of care and attention), followed by item #2 ($\underline{M}$ = 2.27) (i.e., Believes in showing love for me). The items which received the lowest means were item #3 ($\underline{M}$ = 2.00) (i.e., Tells me how much she/he loves me) and item #4 ($\underline{M}$ = 2.01) (i.e., Tells me I'm good-looking). As with the involvement items, students tend to perceive that these acceptance items at least somewhat describe their parents.

TABLE 4

Means and Standard Deviations of Students' Responses to Acceptance Items

	Mean	**S.D.**
Acceptance Items	**2.12**	**.46**
1. Often praises me.	2.09	.66
2. Believes in showing love for me.	2.27	.62
3. Tells me how much she/he loves me.	2.00	.66
4. Tells me I'm good-looking.	2.01	.61
5. Says I make him/her happy.	2.04	.69
6. Gives me a lot of care and attention.	2.28	.63
7. Wants to know everything I do.	2.16	.64
8. Says I'm very good natured.	2.20	.64
9. Always thinks of things that will please me.	2.06	.60

Lax Control

In Table 5 are presented the means and standard deviations for the lax control items. As one can see from Table 5, the subscale mean was 1.73. Also, there was considerably more variation in the means for the lax control questions, which ranged from 1.45 to 2.40, as compared to the two warmth subscales. Also, the lax control means are lower, for the most part, than the means in the acceptance and involvement subscales. The highest mean was for item #1 (M = 2.40) (i.e., Lets me dress any way I please), and the mean for this item was considerably higher than the other means which varied from 1.45 to 1.88. The lowest mean value in the lax control subscale is much lower than the lowest mean values in the involvement and acceptance subscales. Table 5 shows that the lowest mean in the lax control subscale was for item #4 (M = 1.45) (i.e., Doesn't pay attention to my bad behavior), followed by item #9 (M = 1.51) (i.e., Doesn't bother to stick to rules). Results from this subscale indicate that students believe that these items are not particularly characteristic of their parents.

TABLE 5

Means and Standard Deviations of Students' Responses to Lax Control Items

	Mean	**S.D.**
Lax Control Items	**1.73**	**.34**
1. Lets me dress any way I please.	2.40	.58
2. Doesn't tell me when to be home.	1.73	.68
3. Lets me do anything I like.	1.86	.58
4. Doesn't pay attention to my bad behavior.	1.45	.52
5. Doesn't make me obey if I complain.	1.57	.52
6. Excuses my bad behavior.	1.53	.54
7. Can be talked into things easily.	1.88	.56
8. Seldom tell me that I have to do anything.	1.66	.52
9. Doesn't bother to stick to rules.	1.51	.51

Strict Control

The strict control item means and standard deviations are shown in Table 6. The mean for this subscale was 1.9 and the mode was 2.0, more similar to the means for the acceptance and involvement subscales. The range for the strict control means was 1.57 to 2.31. The highest means in the strict control subscale were in item #1 (M = 2.31) (i.e., Makes sure I know what I may do) and item #2 (M = 2.30) (i.e., Wants to know where I am and what I do). The lowest means existed for item #8 (M = 1.57) (i.e., Decides which friends I can go around with), item #9 (M = 1.73) (i.e., Tells me how to spend my free time) and item #5 (M = 1.77) (i.e., Wants to decide on whatever I do). Thus, students perceived that most of these strict control items were *somewhat* descriptive of their parents.

TABLE 6

Means and Standard Deviations of Students' Responses to Strict Control Items

	Mean	S.D.
Strict Control Items	**1.98**	**.38**
1. Makes sure I know what I may do.	2.31	.52
2. Wants to know where I am and what I do.	2.30	.64
3. Doesn't let me go places much.	2.13	.66
4. Always tells me how I should behave.	2.09	.56
5. Wants to decide on whatever I do.	1.77	.56
6. Reminds me about things I can't do.	2.00	.69
7. Is always getting after me.	1.92	.62
8. Decides which friends I can go around with.	1.57	.56
9. Tells me how to spend my free time.	1.73	.61

Research Question 2: Do adolescent perceptions of their parents' behaviors differ depending on the gender of the parent?

Tables 7-10 display the means and standard deviations for each item on each of the subscales: involvement, acceptance, lax control and strict control.

Involvement

Table 7 provides the means and standard deviations for the involvement items categorized by the gender of the parent. As Table 7 shows, the students perceived their mothers ($\underline{M} = 2.3$) to be significantly more involved than their fathers ($\underline{M} = 2.0$), $t(99) = 6.72$, $p < .001$. These results support the hypothesis that mothers are perceived as more involved than fathers. The involvement item means for mothers ranged from 2.1 to 2.4, while the mother involvement item means ranged from 1.9 to 2.1. Mothers had higher scores than fathers on every item. The item with the highest mean value for mothers was seen in item #9 ($\underline{M} = 2.4$) (i.e., Smiles at me often). The highest mean value for fathers was in item #6 ($\underline{M} = 2.1$) (i.e., Has a good time at home with me).

TABLE 7

Means and Standard Deviations of Students' Responses to Involvement Items Classified by Gender of Parent

	Mother		Father	
	Mean	**S.D.**	**Mean**	**S.D.**
Involvement Items *	**2.3**	**.48**	**2.0**	**.56**
1. Talks over my worries with me.	2.3	.71	1.9	.77
2. Makes me feel better when I'm upset.	2.3	.70	1.9	.73
3. Makes me feel free when I'm with her/him.	2.1	.72	2.0	.78
4. Comforts me when I'm afraid.	2.3	.75	1.9	.82
5. Cheers me up when I'm sad.	2.3	.73	1.9	.77
6. Has a good time at home with me.	2.3	.69	2.1	.76
7. Is easy to talk to.	2.2	.81	1.9	.77
8. Sees my good points more than my faults.	2.1	.78	2.0	.73
9. Smiles at me often.	2.4	.70	2.0	.76

* Mothers are significantly more involved than fathers, $t(99) = 6.72$, $p < .001$.

Acceptance

In Table 8 are presented the means and standard deviations for the acceptance items categorized by gender of the parent. As Table 8 depicts, the students perceived their mothers ($\underline{M}$ = 2.3) to be more accepting than their fathers ($\underline{M}$ = 2.0), $t(99) = 5.17$, $\underline{p} < .001$. These results supported the hypothesis that mothers would be perceived as more accepting than fathers. The means in the acceptance subscale for mothers ranged from 2.2 to 2.5, while for father acceptance item means ranged from 1.8 to 2.2. Similar to the involvement subscale results, mothers had higher scores than fathers on every item. The item with the highest mean value for mothers was item #2 ($\underline{M}$ = 2.5) (i.e., Believes in showing love for me). The highest mean value for fathers was in item #8 ($\underline{M}$ = 2.2) (i.e., Says I'm very good natured).

TABLE 8

Means and Standard Deviations of Students' Responses to Acceptance Items Classified by Gender of Parent

	Mother		Father	
	Mean	**S.D.**	**Mean**	**S.D.**
Acceptance Items *	**2.3**	**.55**	**2.0**	**.60**
1. Often praises me.	2.2	.72	2.0	.80
2. Believes in showing love for me.	2.5	.61	2.0	.82
3. Tells me how much she/he loves me.	2.2	.77	1.8	.79
4. Tells me I'm good-looking.	2.2	.72	1.8	.73
5. Says I make him/her happy.	2.2	.77	1.9	.81
6. Gives me a lot of care and attention.	2.4	.69	2.1	.78
7. Wants to know everything I do.	2.3	.80	2.1	.78
8. Says I'm very good natured.	2.3	.73	2.2	.77
9. Always thinks of things that will please me.	2.2	.71	1.9	.78

* Mothers are significantly more accepting than fathers, $t(99) = 5.17$, $\underline{p} < .001$.

Lax Control

Table 9 provides the means and standard deviations for the lax control items categorized by the gender of the parent. Statistically significant differences in maternal and paternal levels of lax control were found, but as indicated by Table 9, the means for mother ($\underline{M}$ = 1.8) and father ($\underline{M}$ = 1.7) were not very dissimilar. Mothers were perceived to display more behaviors related to lax control than fathers; $t(99) = 2.23$, $\underline{p} < .05$. These results support the hypothesis that mothers would be perceived as exhibiting higher levels of lax control than fathers. Items #5, #7 and #9 especially show higher scores for mothers than for fathers. In items #2 and #8, however, the means for fathers are greater than the means for mothers. Lax control means ranged from 1.5 to 2.5 for mothers and 1.4 to 2.3 for fathers. The item with the highest mean for both mothers ($\underline{M}$ = 2.5) and fathers ($\underline{M}$ = 2.3) was seen in item #1 (i.e., Lets me dress any way I please).

TABLE 9

Means and Standard Deviations of Students' Responses to Lax Control Items Classified by Gender of Parent

	Mother		Father	
	Mean	**S.D.**	**Mean**	**S.D.**
Lax Control Items *	**1.8**	**.38**	**1.7**	**.43**
1. Lets me dress any way I please.	2.5	.63	2.3	.75
2. Doesn't tell me when to be home.	1.7	.81	1.8	.84
3. Lets me do anything I like.	1.9	.69	1.9	.72
4. Doesn't pay attention to my bad behavior.	1.5	.63	1.5	.66
5. Doesn't make me obey if I complain.	1.7	.66	1.5	.67
6. Excuses my bad behavior.	1.6	.60	1.5	.67
7. Can be talked into things easily.	2.1	.76	1.7	.79
8. Seldom tell me that I have to do anything.	1.6	.68	1.7	.67
9. Doesn't bother to stick to rules.	1.6	.66	1.4	.59

* Mothers show significantly more lax control than fathers, $t(99) = 2.23$, $\underline{p} < .05$.

Strict Control

Table 10 provides the means and standard deviations for the strict control items categorized by the gender of the parent. As Table 10 depicts, students perceived their mothers ($\underline{M}$ = 2.0) to be equally as strict as their fathers ($\underline{M}$ = 2.0); $t(99) = .51$, $\underline{p} > .05$. These results do not support the hypothesis that fathers would be perceived as exercising more strict control than mothers. Means for strict control items ranged from 1.6 to 2.4 for mothers and 1.6 to 2.2 for fathers. The highest mean values were found in the same questions for mothers and fathers. The items with the highest means for both mothers ($\underline{M}$ = 2.4) and fathers ($\underline{M}$ = 2.2) were seen in item #1 (i.e., Makes sure I know what I may do) and item #2 (i.e., Wants to know where I am and what I do).

TABLE 10

Means and Standard Deviations of Students' Responses to Strict Control Items Classified by Gender of Parent

	Mother		Father	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Strict Control Items	**2.0**	**.45**	**2.0**	**.46**
1. Makes sure I know what I may do.	2.4	.60	2.2	.72
2. Wants to know where I am and what I do.	2.4	.73	2.2	.77
3. Doesn't let me go places much.	2.1	.77	2.1	.79
4. Always tells me how I should behave.	2.2	.75	2.0	.75
5. Wants to decide on whatever I do.	1.8	.67	1.7	.72
6. Reminds me about things I can't do.	2.0	.81	2.0	.81
7. Is always getting after me.	2.0	.73	1.9	.71
8. Decides which friends I can go around with.	1.6	.64	1.6	.72
9. Tells me how to spend my free time.	1.7	.71	1.7	.74

Comparison Across Subscales

Different patterns of results emerged in comparisons of mother and father scores for the subscales of involvement, acceptance, and lax control. Mothers scored significantly higher than fathers in the subscales of involvement, acceptance, and lax control, but there was no difference between mothers and fathers in strict control. Overall means for acceptance and involvement were similar for mothers ($\underline{M}$ = 2.3) and also for fathers ($\underline{M}$ = 2.0). Strict control was slightly lower for mothers ($\underline{M}$ = 2.0) than the involvement and acceptance subscales, but was similar for fathers ($\underline{M}$ = 2.0). Finally, lax control means were much lower for both mothers ($\underline{M}$ = 1.8) and fathers ($\underline{M}$ = 1.7) than means for the other subscales.

Research Question 3: Do differences exist in male and female adolescent perceptions of parental behaviors?

Table 11 displays the means and standard deviations of boys and girls for the four subscales, and separately for mothers and fathers.

Involvement

As Table 11 shows, the means for girls' ($\underline{M}$ = 2.2) and boys' ($\underline{M}$ = 2.1) perceptions of their parents' level of involvement did not vary much: $t(98) = 1.46$, $\underline{p} > .05$. These results do not support the hypothesis that girls would perceive higher degrees of parental involvement than boys. Mean values in the subscale of involvement for girls ranged from 2.1 to 2.3 and for boys ranged from 1.9 to 2.3. While boys and girls did not differ in their perception of maternal involvement, girls perceived their fathers to be more involved ($\underline{M}$ = 2.1) than did boys ($\underline{M}$ = 1.9).

Acceptance

Attention to Table 11 shows patterns of responding similar to the involvement subscale. That is, girls' and boys' perceptions of their parents' level of acceptance did not vary significantly: $t(98) = 1.08$, $p > .05$. These results do not support the hypothesis that girls would report higher degrees of acceptance from parents that boys. The mean values for girls ranged from 2.1 to 2.3 and from 1.9 to 2.2 for boys.

Lax Control

Table 11 indicates that there was no significant difference in terms of girls' and boys' perceptions of parental lax control behaviors: $t(98) = 1.36$, $p > .05$. These results did not support the hypothesis that boys would report lower levels of lax control in parental behaviors than girls. Mean values for the subscale of lax control were all 1.7 for girls and ranged from 1.7 to 1.8 for boys.

Strict Control

In Table 11, it is clear that there were no significant gender differences in perceptions of parental strict control behaviors: $t(98) = .38$, $p > .05$. These results did not support the hypothesis that boys would perceive more behaviors related to strict control than girls. The strict control mean value was 2.0, consistently for girls and boys, and regardless of whether they were rating maternal or paternal behaviors.

Comparison Across Subscales

Gender differences were not significant in any of the four subscales of involvement, acceptance, lax control and strict control. Total mean values for each of

the four subscales were fairly similar, though lax control items had lower mean values for girls and boys than the other three subscales. The highest mean values for girls and boys were found in the involvement and acceptance subscales.

TABLE 11

Means and Standard Deviations for Girls' and Boys' Perceptions of Parental Behaviors

	GIRLS		BOYS		DIFFERENCE
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Involvement	2.2	.45	2.1	.47	NO
Mother Involvement	2.3	.45	2.3	.51	
Father Involvement	2.1	.56	1.9	.55	
Acceptance	2.2	.57	2.1	.44	NO
Mother Acceptance	2.3	.59	2.2	.52	
Father Acceptance	2.1	.67	1.9	.50	
Lax Control	1.7	.34	1.8	.35	NO
Mother Lax Control	1.7	.34	1.8	.41	
Father Lax Control	1.7	.45	1.7	.41	
Strict Control	2.0	.37	2.0	.39	NO
Mother Strict Control	2.0	.44	2.0	.46	
Father Strict Control	2.0	.45	2.0	.48	

Other Findings

Due to the ethnically diverse nature of the sample, an analysis of variance was carried out in order to determine if significant ethnic differences existed in relation to the subscales of parental warmth and control. Table 12 displays the means and standard deviations for each of the subscales. As Table 12 indicates, adolescents of the three major ethnic groups represented in the sample did not differ in their perceptions of paternal involvement ($F(2,92) = 1.8$); paternal acceptance ($F(2,92) = 3.0$); paternal lax control ($F(2,92) = 1.1$); paternal strict control ($F(2,92) = .82$); or maternal lax control ($F(2,92) = .16$). In contrast, there was a significant ethnic difference in maternal involvement ($F(2,92) = 3.6$, $p < .05$). A Scheffé test revealed that White non-Hispanic students ($M = 2.4$) perceived their mothers to be more involved than Asian-American students did ($M = 2.1$). Similarly, with respect to maternal acceptance, a highly significant difference was found between the three ethnic groups ($F(2,92) = 7.07$, $p < .01$), and Asian-American students perceived less acceptance on the part of their mothers ($M = 1.97$) than did White non-Hispanic students ($M = 2.4$). Finally, students also varied in terms of strict control ($F(2,92) = 4.05$, $p < .05$). The Scheffé procedure indicated that no two ethnic groups were significantly different from each other.

TABLE 12

Means and Standard Deviations for Students' Perceptions of Parental Behaviors by Ethnic Groups

	Asian American		Hispanic		White	
	Mean	**S. D.**	**Mean**	**S. D.**	**Mean**	**S. D.**
Involvement	1.9	.50	2.2	.56	2.3	.46
Mother Involvement**	2.1	.52	2.3	.44	2.4	.46
Father Involvement*	1.8	.53	2.0	.52	2.0	.60
Acceptance	2.0	.46	2.2	.42	2.2	.48
Mother Acceptance**	2.0	.56	2.3	.54	2.4	.48
Father Acceptance*	1.8	.56	2.1	.68	2.1	.58
Lax Control	1.7	.34	1.8	.40	1.7	.33
Mother Lax Control*	1.8	.38	1.8	.41	1.8	.38
Father Lax Control*	1.7	.42	1.8	.50	1.6	.41
Strict Control	2.0	.42	2.1	.37	1.9	.31
Mother Strict Control**	2.1	.46	2.2	.41	1.9	.43
Father Strict Control*	2.0	.49	2.0	.46	1.9	.40

* No significant main effect for ethnic group.

** Significant main effect for ethnic group.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine adolescent perceptions of parenting behaviors related to warmth and control. This study also looked at gender differences between perceptions of male and female students, as well as the differences between perceptions of maternal and paternal behaviors.

The first research question addressed whether adolescent perceptions of parental behaviors relating to warmth and control were positive or negative. Results showed that students generally perceived that their parents were involved and accepting of them. Warmth was particularly expressed through behaviors such as having a good time at home with the student, smiling at the student, and giving the student a lot of care and attention. Among the warmth behaviors, students perceived fewer parental behaviors relating to being easy to talk to, telling the student that he or she is good-looking, and telling the student how much he or she is loved.

Overall, these students perceived their parents as fairly involved, accepting and also employing "healthy" control behaviors. Most of the literature on adolescent perceptions of parenting styles compares the perception of the adolescent with the perception of the parent. In terms of the warmth dimension, many of these studies found that adolescents perceive the family in a more negative light than do the parents (e.g., Barnes & Olson, 1985; Niemi, 1974; Noller & Callan, 1986). However, the current study did not attempt to compare the perceptions of the students with their parents, but the results are supported to a certain degree by the earlier studies. For example, in their study on cohesion and adaptability in families, Callan and Noller (1986) found that adolescents perceive less warmth-related behaviors in the family than their parents, but still felt that their parents were equally as "friendly" as other members of the family. That is, the

adolescents perceived warmth in their parents' behaviors, although not as much warmth as was perceived by the parents.

With respect to the control dimension, students generally perceived that their parents were somewhat strict with them. Less lax control related behaviors were perceived by the students. Lax control was especially expressed through behaviors such as letting the student dress the way he or she chose, and parents being able to be talked into things easily. Among the lax control behaviors, students perceived fewer parental behaviors involving inconsistency with enforcing the rules, and ignoring bad behavior. Strict control was particularly shown in parental behaviors like clearly stating what the student may or may not do, and keeping track of where the student is and what he or she is doing. Parental behaviors related to strict control that were less frequent according to the students were deciding which friends the student could hang around with, and telling the student how to spend his or her free time.

The current study also found that students perceived their parents to be somewhat strict rather than lax in their control. Much of the literature that explored control in parent-adolescent relationships compared the perceptions of the parent with the perceptions of the adolescent (e.g., Callan & Noller, 1986; Harris & Howard, 1981; Jessop, 1981). However, these studies do give partial support to the current findings. For example, Harris and Howard (1981) found that adolescents differentiate between reasonable and unreasonable control and attached positive feelings with reasonable or healthy control and negative feelings with unreasonable or unhealthy control. Since the students in the current study reported higher levels of strict control than lax control from their parents, as well as a high degree of involvement and acceptance, it appears that the strict control was balanced appropriately with warm parenting behaviors.

A second research question examined whether students perceived differences in involved, accepting, lax control and strict control behaviors as a function of the parents' gender. Two related hypotheses were that mothers would be perceived as more accepting and more involved than fathers. Results showed that students perceived their mothers as exhibiting significantly more acceptance- and involvement-related behaviors than fathers. Particular warmth-related parental behaviors in which mothers received higher ratings than fathers were making the student feel better when he or she was upset and talking over worries with the student. These results are consistent with other research demonstrating higher perceptions of maternal warmth as compared to paternal warmth (e.g., Collins, 1991; Hauser, 1987; Kagan & Lemkin, 1960; Steinberg, 1987). Specifically, these findings have been noted in relation to role patterns in which the mother is perceived to be the more nurturing figure, while the father is regarded as the instrumental figure. For example, Dahlem (1970) found that male and female adolescents cited their mother rather than their father for the warmth-related items involving kindness and considerateness.

A third hypothesis, that mothers would be perceived as exhibiting higher levels of lax control than fathers, was also supported. Students felt that they could talk their mothers into things more often than their fathers and that mothers do not make them obey if the student complained. In other research, the findings of greater lax control-related behaviors in mothers is also noted (e.g., Kagan & Lemkin, 1960; Muller & Goldberg, 1980). For example, Kagan and Lemkin (1960) found that both male and female children cited their father as the parent that usually gave the punishment in the family while the mother was not recognized for control-related behaviors.

Another hypothesis was that fathers would be perceived as exercising more strict control than mothers. In contrast to the current literature which found fathers to be more punitive and exhibiting more strict control than mothers (Dahlem, 1970; Droppleman &

Schaefer, 1963; Kagan & Lemkin, 1960), the current study found no difference between levels of perceived strict control in maternal and paternal behaviors. However, the findings from McDermott et al. (1987) indicated that half of the female adolescents from the study felt that their mother was as strict as their father. Therefore, the results from the current study could be due in part to a recent increase in the perception of maternal power in the family. A relation may exist between the perception of maternal strictness and the power that women have relatively recently achieved in society in general.

The third research question examined whether differences exist between male and female adolescent perceptions of parental behaviors. Two related hypotheses were that girls would report higher levels of parental involvement and acceptance than boys. These hypotheses were not supported in that female students did not demonstrate significantly higher levels of parental involvement and acceptance than the male students. This finding is in contrast with earlier literature which found that adolescent girls perceive more warmth-related parenting behaviors than adolescent boys (Ausubel et al., 1954; McDermott et al., 1983; Noller & Callan, 1986). The finding does, however, find support in the research by Youniss and Ketterlinus (1987) which also revealed no significant gender differences between adolescent girls' and boys' perceptions of parental caring.

Two hypotheses that boys will report higher levels of parental strict control and lower levels of parental lax control than girls were also addressed. These hypotheses, like the hypotheses of gender differences in the perception of parental warmth, were not supported by the results of the study. Gender differences did not exist in either of the subscales of lax control or strict control. The research on gender differences in perceptions of parental control was, as indicated earlier, scant. The differences that were found in the research mainly focused on differences in male and female perceptions of authority-related roles. However, this hypothesis was asserted based on research that

found adolescent boys to be more dissatisfied with family-oriented experiences and family distribution of power (Grinder & Spector, 1965; Noller & Callan, 1986). The lack of gender differences could be attributed to the advances that females have made toward greater equality in recent decades. Gender equality could also be reflected in the home and in the way that girls and boys are coming to be treated by their parents. Therefore, warmth- and control-related parenting behaviors may now be more evenly distributed by parents between their male and female children.

Overall, the results from this study indicate that the students perceived themselves to be raised by warm, involved, and accepting parents who used strict control in a healthy way. Differences between maternal and paternal patterns of parenting were found, but there were not variations in the perceptions of male versus female students. These findings have interesting implications on parenting today. First, differences between maternal and paternal behaviors indicate that mothers were perceived as being more warm than fathers, but equally as strict. Perceived maternal strictness could be an indication of the greater egalitarianism in contemporary marriages and also of greater degrees of female power in general. This study indicates that both of the parents are perceived as being a part of the parenting process, and that discipline measures are not left for the father to handle. Second, since male and female students did not differ significantly in their perceptions of parental behaviors, an assumption could be made that fewer gender stereotypes exist in the students' homes. The males and females in the study may be treated in this egalitarian way because of the higher level of education that the parents in this study have. Also, since the sample was taken from a university, the students in this study may be more assertive, independent, and goal-oriented than another sample might have been. These qualities may be an indication that the females in the sample were treated by their parents in ways that would promote such healthy outcomes as deciding to

attend college and working towards a goal. All in all, the students from the current study appear to hold positive feelings about the way in which they were raised. Positive implications from these results can be drawn in terms of adolescent socialization and development.

Limitations

There are several limitations of the current study that must be considered in interpreting the results. First, because the study took a retrospective approach to adolescent perceptions, the elapsed time between when the subjects were sixteen and now could have changed the subjects' perceptions of the parental behaviors which occurred when the subjects were sixteen years old. Second, the sample that was used in the current study was taken from a university psychology class. The university sample could be a biased sample because of the greater level of education that families affiliated with a university generally have. Higher levels of education are often associated with the authoritative style of parenting, which promotes parental involvement, acceptance, and healthy control. A third limitation relates to the Parent Behavior Form that was used to examine parenting behaviors. Only a few items were used to assess each subscale and only two subscales comprised each dimension. Thus, there are many other parental behaviors that might be included in warmth- and control-related behaviors that were not included. These limitations do not detract from the significance of the study, but must be considered in the interpretations of the findings.

Questions for Further Research

Although the current study shed light on questions concerning adolescent perceptions of parental warmth and control, further research is still necessary. The

differences between some of the results found in the current study and those from previous literature concerning adolescent attitudes of parental warmth and control warrants further explanation. The age of the subjects could be examined more carefully to determine whether perceptions of parenting behaviors change from late adolescence to early adulthood.

Gender differences in adolescent perceptions of parental behaviors were also met with conflicting reports between the present study and earlier research. The lack of gender differences found in the current study could be better understood with a larger sample or more comprehensive questionnaire.

Ethnic differences could also be further researched in terms of adolescent perceptions of parenting styles. The ethnically diverse sample in the current study offered some interesting findings in terms of cultural differences. Further research should carefully examine ethnic differences in parenting behaviors.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Form

Agreement to Participate in Research
Responsible Investigator: Jani Kozlowski
Title of Protocol: Gender Differences in Adolescent Perceptions of Parenting Styles

1. You have been asked to participate in a research study investigating the perceptions that adolescents hold concerning certain parenting styles. You will be asked to think back to when you were 16 years old. The study is entirely confidential and will not include any identifying questions (ie: your name will not be asked in the questionnaire).

2. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire derived from the Parent Behavior Form by Worell and Worell. This will take place during a scheduled class time in the regular location that class meetings are held.

3. No risks at all are anticipated for the study.

4. No discernible benefits are expected for the subjects that choose to participate in the research.

5. The results of the study may be published, but no information that could identify the subject will be included in the study.

6. There will be no compensation to the subjects for participating in the study.

7. Questions concerning the research may be directed to: Jani Kozlowski (415) 694-7844. Any complaints about the research may be presented to: Irene Miura, Child Development Department, (408) 924-3718

Questions or complaints about research, subjects' rights, or research-related injury may be presented to: Serena Stanford, Ph.D. Associate Academic Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research, (408) 924-2480

8. No service of any kind, to which a subject is otherwise entitled, will be lost or jeopardized if a person chooses to "not participate" in the study.

9. Consent is given voluntarily. A subject may refuse to participate in the study or in any part of the study. If a subject decides to participate in the study, he or she is free to

withdraw at any time without prejudice to the subject's relations with San Jose State University or any other participating institutions.

10. You have received a signed and dated copy of the consent form.

- **The signature of a subject on this document indicates agreement to participate in the study.**

- **The signature of a researcher on this document indicates agreement to include the above named subject in the research and attestation that the subject has been fully informed of his or her rights.**

Subject's Signature	Date
Investigator's Signature	Date

APPENDIX B

Instructions for the Questionnaire

DIRECTIONS

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out how you felt about your parent's parenting styles when you were 16 years old. The first page of the questionnaire will ask some general questions concerning you, your parents, and your living arrangements when you were a teenager. Mark the most appropriate space. On the following pages you will find a series of statements which a person might use to describe his or her parents. Many of the statements concern issues that are typically dealt with by adolescents. **Think back to your experiences when you were sixteen years old.** Read each statement and decide which answer most closely describes the way each of your parents acted toward you when you were sixteen. The first page will be questions about your mother's method of parenting and the second page will be questions about your father's method of parenting as you remember from when you were 16 years old. Please read each item carefully. Decide if each statement is:

1. **"like" your mother/father**--like the parenting method your mother/father used when you were 16
2. **"somewhat like" your mother/father**--somewhat like the method your parent used when you were 16
3. **"not like" your mother/father**--not like the method your parent used when you were 16

Mark an "X" in the appropriate space (under "like", "somewhat like" or "not like") next to that item. Complete all items on both pages to the best of your knowledge. There is no right or wrong answer to any of the items because they are just an indication of your own beliefs or ideas.

APPENDIX C

Family Information Form

This is a confidential survey. Please do not put your name on it. Check the most appropriate space:

1. Please indicate your family living arrangements when you were 16 years old:
   - Live with both mom and dad _____
   - Live with mom only _____
   - Live with dad only _____
   - Live in joint custody arrangement _____
   - Live with mom and stepdad _____
   - Live with dad and stepmom _____
   - Live with other relatives _____
   - Other: Please explain _____

2. What is your ethnic group background?
   - Asian American, Pacific Islander _____
   - Hispanic, Chicano, Latino, Mexican American _____
   - African American, Afro American, Black _____
   - Native American _____
   - White, non-Hispanic _____
   - Other; please explain _____

3. What is your gender? Male _____ Female _____

4. What is your age? _____

5. Please check the levels of education that each parent has completed:

Mother		**Father**	
Jr. High or some High School	____	Jr. High or some High School	____
High School diploma	____	High School diploma	____
Some college	____	Some college	____
College degree	____	College degree	____
Postgraduate degree	____	Postgraduate degree	____